

FIND COPY THAT COULD BE SIMPLIFIED AND FIND THE EXCESS

(SIMPLIFYING COPY)

Consider this copy Uber (<http://www.uber.com/>) might write to describe how easy its service is. The copy seems simple enough but by tightening it up, you can see how short, direct statements directed at the reader are more powerful and compelling.

EXAMPLE DRAFT - 58 WORDS:

*Just tap once in the Uber app and one of our drivers will come directly to you.
Hop right in - your driver will know exactly where you want to go
And when you reach your destination, you don't need to worry about cash or cards.
You can just step out because payment seamlessly happens through our app.*

Fixes: Use the active voice, eliminate unnecessary words, omit obvious points, make the copy more direct. Finished Version - 30 words:

*One tap and a car comes directly to you.
Hop in - your driver knows exactly where to go. And when you get there, just step out.
Payment is completely seamless.*

NOW TRY IT YOURSELF!

Look for copy on your website - or any website. It could be a blurb of text on a home page, a product description page, an FAQ... anything. Focus on a section and consider these questions to help you simplify the copy you see.

2.7 Activity **FIND COPY THAT COULD BE SIMPLIFIED AND FIND THE EXCESS**

Before you read the copy:

1. Does the copy look too long, cramped, or too boring to read?
2. Is there a title or header? If so, is it clear and interesting?
3. How long would it take you to read the copy: 'Not long at all' or 'this might take a while'?
4. Would you read this copy? Or would you skip it?

Read the first line:

1. Does it clearly communicate an idea or subject?
2. Is the first line interesting, intriguing, or exciting?
3. If you kept reading, how confident are you you'll find what you expected?
4. Would you keep reading? Or would you skip the rest?

Read the rest of the copy:

1. Did the copy communicate what you expected or hoped?
2. Did the copy make you feel anything: satisfied, amused, confused, annoyed, or intrigued?
3. Were any of the words or terms confusing, vague, or make you think too much?
4. Are any of the details unnecessary or off-topic?
5. Is any of the copy self-explanatory or obvious?
6. Does each line of copy naturally lead into the next one?
7. Does each line of copy support the main idea or topic?
8. Has the copy delivered what was promised in the title?



2.7 Activity **FIND COPY THAT COULD BE SIMPLIFIED AND FIND THE EXCESS**

Here are some experiments to try:

- ☐ Could you shorten the title or header AND make it clearer?
- ☐ Could you remove HALF the words in this copy and make it clearer?
Try it!
- ☐ Rewrite copy to simplify each detail.
- ☐ Look for obvious details, redundant ideas, and off-topic information.
(If removing half the words is too much, try shortening 1 or 2 sentences instead.)
- ☐ Could you replace any confusing words or terms with simpler, clearer ones?
- ☐ Could you make the last line stronger and clearer?

Less isn't always better, but it's often times clearer. Look for ways to simplify your copy today.